

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

FOIAb3b

POINT OF VIEW

Katzenbach's Post Secure

By MARGUERITE HIGGINS
Star Special Writer

There is a very practical reason why President Johnson will most likely keep Nicholas Katzenbach as acting Attorney General and boss of the Justice Department until at least after November.

For soundings taken by friends of the President confirmed warnings that there would be a virtual exodus of key members of the very distinguished staff that had been put together at Justice by Robert Kennedy, if an outsider were superimposed on Mr. Katzenbach and the rest of the staff.

Burke Marshall, who has turned in a brilliant 24-hour-a-day performance as assistant Attorney General for civil rights, was on notice as being ready to leave almost instantly if Mr. Katzenbach were passed over for someone else.

Explained a Justice Department official: "The team put together here by Bob Kennedy is very close-knit and sustained by tremendous morale that has grown out of successful handling of one great crisis after another.

"The Attorney General demanded more of them than they knew they had to give. They were playing way above their heads, and it gave them a sense of pride and camaraderie—and utter devotion to the Attorney General.

"His departure was a sharp blow, but at least Katzenbach was a leader they knew and respected. For Katzenbach, they would try to perform the same miracles as they had for Bob Kennedy—but for a stranger, it would not be possible."

Before turning in his resignation, Mr. Kennedy tried discreetly to obtain a commitment from President Johnson to name Mr. Katzenbach, who was Deputy Attorney General, to be his replacement.

Although Mr. Johnson thinks highly of Mr. Katzenbach's skills, the President declined to give such a commitment as he did not want his hands tied. Indeed, he sounded out several "outsiders," including Senator Dodd of Connecticut, about taking the post. But after hearing that the appointment of an outsider would mean denuding the Justice Department of much talent, he deferred decision.

* * * *

The Defense Department, White House and State Department have developed a very skillful way of checkmating charges made by Senator Goldwater by preparing answers for release virtually simultaneously with important speeches by the G. O. P. nominee.

How does the Johnson administration find out what Harry is going to say? Very simple. They just obtain copies of his most important speeches—an easy thing to do since many of them are distributed several days in advance by the Republican National Committee.

The speech is finely combed and answers swiftly prepared so that no Goldwater remarks on defense or foreign affairs will stand unchallenged—or do a solo in the headlines.

When the Johnson admin-

istration got wind of Senator Goldwater's intention to appoint a foreign affairs advisory committee headed by Richard Nixon, the State Department and the White House did some fast footwork and completed a rival foreign affairs advisory list for President Johnson with such star spangled names as Dean Acheson and Allen Dulles.

The White House made public its Foreign Affairs Advisory Committee in Washington even as Senator Goldwater was announcing his group on the West Coast. And to Senator Goldwater's frustration, it was Mr. Johnson's list that got the biggest headlines.

* * * *

Is there a gentleman's agreement between the White House and Gen. Lyman Lemnitzer, supreme commander in Europe, that would permit this American general, or his successor, to authorize American troops at the front lines in Europe to retaliate against a local Soviet nuclear surprise attack employing Russian tactical nuclear weapons on the ground?

Would Gen. Lemnitzer be able to give such authorization without having to take the precious—and perhaps fatal—elapsed time of the hour minimum that appears necessary to refer the matter to Washington for instructions?

The existence of such a gentleman's agreement has been persistently reported in recent weeks by high sources in NATO. And these sources claim to have been told of it, albeit somewhat obliquely, by high Defense Department officials.

According to one of the highest ranking Europeans in the NATO structure: "It does not seem realistic that any President of the United States would insist that American front-line troops must submit passively to nuclear Soviet attack on the ground since these troops would almost certainly be obliterated before there had been time to check back with Washington and obtain the order to defend themselves and fire back."

This gentleman's agreement, according to NATO sources, applies only to instances where the Russians first employed tactical nuclear weapons in, for example, an attack on the city of Hamburg.

* * * *

Washington is notorious for the swift ups and downs of political life, and things have not changed in the Johnson administration. A few months ago, President Johnson was advising newsmen to check with presidential aides Jack

Valenti or Bill Moyers if they really wanted to know the facts of what was going on.

But now the President has told several successive groups of reporters in private meetings that the White House men to see are Douglas Cater, a White House assistant, or George Reedy. "Jef Valenti," the President said, "isn't a power around here like some of you newspapermen claim. Valenti mostly just brings me messages."

© 1964